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ABSTRACT

In 1983, Drexel University became one of the first universities in the country to require all incoming students to have personal access to a microcomputer. To support this program, a considerable staff was needed to perform ongoing functions as well as numerous special-purpose, one-time-only tasks. This paper describes the positions that were established to facilitate the microcomputing requirement and discusses the qualifications that seemed most valuable in filling these positions as the program evolved. Changes in positions and the reporting structure that occurred over the first two years of the program are shown in two organizational charts. Positions and responsibilities constantly evolved as the program grew and needs changed and a comparison of the two charts shows the evolutionary integration of the microcomputing program into the regular university structure. Positions described include: Director of the Microcomputing Program; Coordinator, Technical Planning; Coordinator, Special Projects; Coordinator, Faculty Development; Manager, Academic Computing; Manager, Software Development Group; Manager, Micro User Support Group; Coordinator, Information Services; Manager, Equipment Support Group; Manager, Microcomputer Administration; and Manager, User Services. (THC)

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Personnel Requirements

Drexel University

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Personnel Requirements

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In 1983, Drexel University became one of the first universities in the country to require all incoming students to have personal access to a microcomputer. Eighteen hundred students were covered by this requirement during the first year it was in place. Added to this number were the 400 full-time faculty involved in the education of those students. Over time, upperclassmen, graduate students, and persons in a variety of staff positions within the University also became microcomputer users. To support this program, a considerable staff was needed to perform on-going functions and as well as numerous special-purpose, one-time-only tasks.

This paper is an attempt to describe the positions that were established to facilitate the microcomputing requirement at Drexel. It also includes some discussion of the qualifications that seemed most valuable in filling these positions as the program evolved. Changes in positions and the reporting structure that occurred over time are also noted.

The two organizational charts at the end of this document show the major positions and reporting structures in force during the first two years of the program. It should be noted that positions and responsibilities constantly evolved as the program grew and needs changed. A comparison of the two charts shows the evolutionary integration of the microcomputing program into the regular university structure.

Director of the Microcomputing Program. The Director has been ultimately responsible for all aspects of the Microcomputing Program at Drexel University. From the beginning of the program, the Director reported directly to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. He was assisted by a professional staff and two advisory bodies, the Microcomputing Policy Committee and the Student Advisory Committee.

The Director was appointed approximately eight months before the program's first microcomputers arrived on campus. During the first year of the program, the Director also served as Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs. During the second year, he was appointed Associate Vice President for Computing and Telecommunications. This latter appointment served to integrate microcomputing with the rest of the computing activities on campus and acknowledged the fact that central computing and microcomputing were two aspects of a single activity.

Because of the numerous contract negotiations required (e.g., hardware purchases, software site licenses, and bulk purchase contracts) considerable business as well as legal and contractual experience was required for this position. In addition, experience in the management of a large project was essential as logistical planning was at times complex, and staffing (including part-time personnel) occasionally reached 200.

Coordinator, Technical Planning. The Coordinator of Technical Planning was in charge of evaluating the technical needs of the program during the first year. The primary responsibilites of this position were to explore networking options, alternative delivery systems for printing, and establishment of computer-based laboratories. The Technical Planning Coordinator also chaired the Microcomputing Policy Committee.

During the second year of the program, the Coordinator of Technical Planning was named Interim Director of the Computer Center. This appointment recognized the need to coordinate overall responsibility for computing within one office. This position required a great deal of knowledge of sophisticated software and hardware altenatives plus the ability to understand and anticipate end user needs.

Coordinator, Special Projects. The Special Projects Coordinator has served primarily as a special assistant to the Director, working on short-term projects and serving as a general facilitator and troubleshooter.

During the first year the Coordinator of Special Projects was responsible for internal and external publications regarding the program. The Special Projects Coordinator also planned and administered faculty development activities; coordinated projects on a variety of special topics, such as the development of a series of materials to educate student and faculty on issues related to software abuse; and served as administrator for the Microcomputing Policy Committee and liaison to student groups.

During the second year, responsibilities for internal communications were assumed by the Manager of User Services (see below). The Special Projects Coordinator continued to handle most external communications and worked on further integration of computing into the activities of individuals within the University and on efforts to obtain future funding for program support. Good writing and general communication skills as well as a strong service orientation were essential to this position.

Coordinator, Faculty Development. During the first year of the program the Faculty Development Coordinator represented the faculty at meetings of the management team, worked with the Special Projects Coordinator on the planning of faculty development activities in relation to the microcomputing effort and with other groups on campus in planning of activities and services designed to encourage faculty to learn about and use microcomputers.

During the second year the faculty representation was assumed by the Microcomputing Policy Committee. The faculty member who had served as Faculty Development Coordinator continued to be closely associated with the microcomputing program and is still called upon to represent the University at numerous conferences on microcomputing in higher education. A great deal of technical knowledge plus a sensitivity to user concerns and good communication skills were required for this position.

Manager, Academic Computing. This position existed within the Computer Center before the initiation of the microcomputing program and was responsible for the University's computing service as it related to undergraduate and graduate instruction and research. During the first year the Manager of Academic Computing reported both to the Director of the Microcomputing Program and to the Director of the Computer Center. This dual reporting structure allowed for coordination and minimal duplication of effort. The Managers of the User Support Group, the Software Development Group, and the Information Services Coordinator reported directly to the Manager of Academic Computing. This position required a great deal of attention to detail and knowledge of the latest technical developments in academic computing, especially in regard to electronic communications.

During the second year of the program the Manager of Academic Computing became Assistant to the Director of the Computing Center. Responsibilities included supervision of new technical and developmental projects, especially in the areas of networking and communications, and of mainframe, printer, and file-server support of the Macintosh environment. Management of the various units that had reported to the Manager of Academic Computing was assumed by the Manager of User Services.

Manager, Software Development Group. The primary role of the Software Development Group (SDG) for the first two years was to assist Drexel faculty with technical aspects of design and implementation of instructional software for the Macintosh. The SDG Manager coordinates a staff of five senior analysts, 15-18 full-time programmers, and 7-10 part-time programmers. At any one time, there are approximately 25-30 active faculty projects that require support from one or more SDG staff members. Staff assist faculty in the selection, adaptation, and use of existing software or become part of a project team to design and develop new software.

The SDG Manager has provided a communication link between projects, archived University-developed materials, coordinated training for programming staff, and supervised the maintenance of a software database of specialized modules for use by project teams. In addition, the SDG Manager has served as technical liaison with Apple Technical Support for

the entire University community and directed testing of development tools and pre-release products (software and hardware) for possible University adoption.

Through these activites and through active participation in faculty projects, the SDG Manager has assisted in dissemination of information regarding techniques, methods, and concepts across departmental, college, and University boundaries. This position requires a strong technical background in programming environments, good communication and personnel management skills, and sensitivity to faculty concerns.

Manager, Micro User Support Group. The manager of the Micro User Support Group (MUSG) has been responsible for all end-user support services for the Microcomputing Program. These services include walk-in consulting, the user "Hot Line" (a phone consulting service operated approximately 14 hours per day), consulting in the student clusters, and monitoring of all access areas and printer stations. In addition the USG provides consulting services in the Faculty Access Cluster and the Software Review Center, distributes public domain and course-specific Mac software, and schedules use of the special, Macintosh equipped classrooms.

Coordinator, Information Services. The Information Services Coordinator has been responsible for the collection and dissemination of information relating to the Microcomputing Program to all members of the Drexel community (students, faculty, and staff). Included among the services are user "tips", short-courses on various Macintosh topics, and information on Macintosh products and user groups. The Coordinator is responsible for seeing that the user support staff is kept informed of current information on administrative policies and procedures, software update procedures, delivery dates, etc. Training and experience in the development and administration of user information services were extremely useful to this position.

Manager, Equipment Support Group. The Manager of the Equipment Support Group has been and continues to be responsible for providing technical assistance on hardware problems, service, repair, and security for all microcomputers owned by or bought through the University.

The ESG Manager supervises the initial receipt, check-out, and distribution of all Macintosh computers received by the University. He also manages repair of all Macintosh computers and related peripheral equipment bought through the University. ESG staff is certified to make all repairs under the initial 90-day warranty and the manufacturer's extended warranty policy. They also provide service and repair on a fixed-cost basis to all those who have bought their equipment through Drexel but do not opt for an extended care policy. This service is provided on a cost-recovery basis. Minimal staffing is maintained (approximately one repair person for every 1,500 Macintosh computers) while service is monitored on a regular basis to guarantee that adequate services are provided. A 24-hour turn-around on repairs is the norm. If repairs fall behind this schedule, additional personnel are hired.

The ESG Manager also coordinates all security measures related to the Microcomputing Program. These include the maintenance of both physical and electronic security devices in special microcomputing facilities and throughout the campus and the "hot-stamping" of all Drexel Macintosh computers with a Drexel " D" to identify them as part of the Drexel program. This position requires a great deal of experience and proficiency in the equipment repair as well as a strong service orientation.

Manager, Microcomputer Administration. The Manager of Microcomputer Accounts serves as the business manager for the program. He is responsible for development and maintenance of all procedures and records related to purchase, warranty, and insurance in regard to microcomputers and related equipment purchased through the University's microcomputing program. He maintains the database that includes serial numbers of all equipment and software purchased through the program. He is also the primary vendor contact for equipment and supplies related to the program. He is assisted in these tasks by two full-time clerk/secretaries and part-time personnel when necessary.

During the first year of the program the Manager of Microcomputer Administration worked closely with the Comptroller's Office to establish and maintain a convenient process by which computers and other course-related hardware can be issued with a minimum of paperwork and logistical red tape. During the second year he assumed a position within

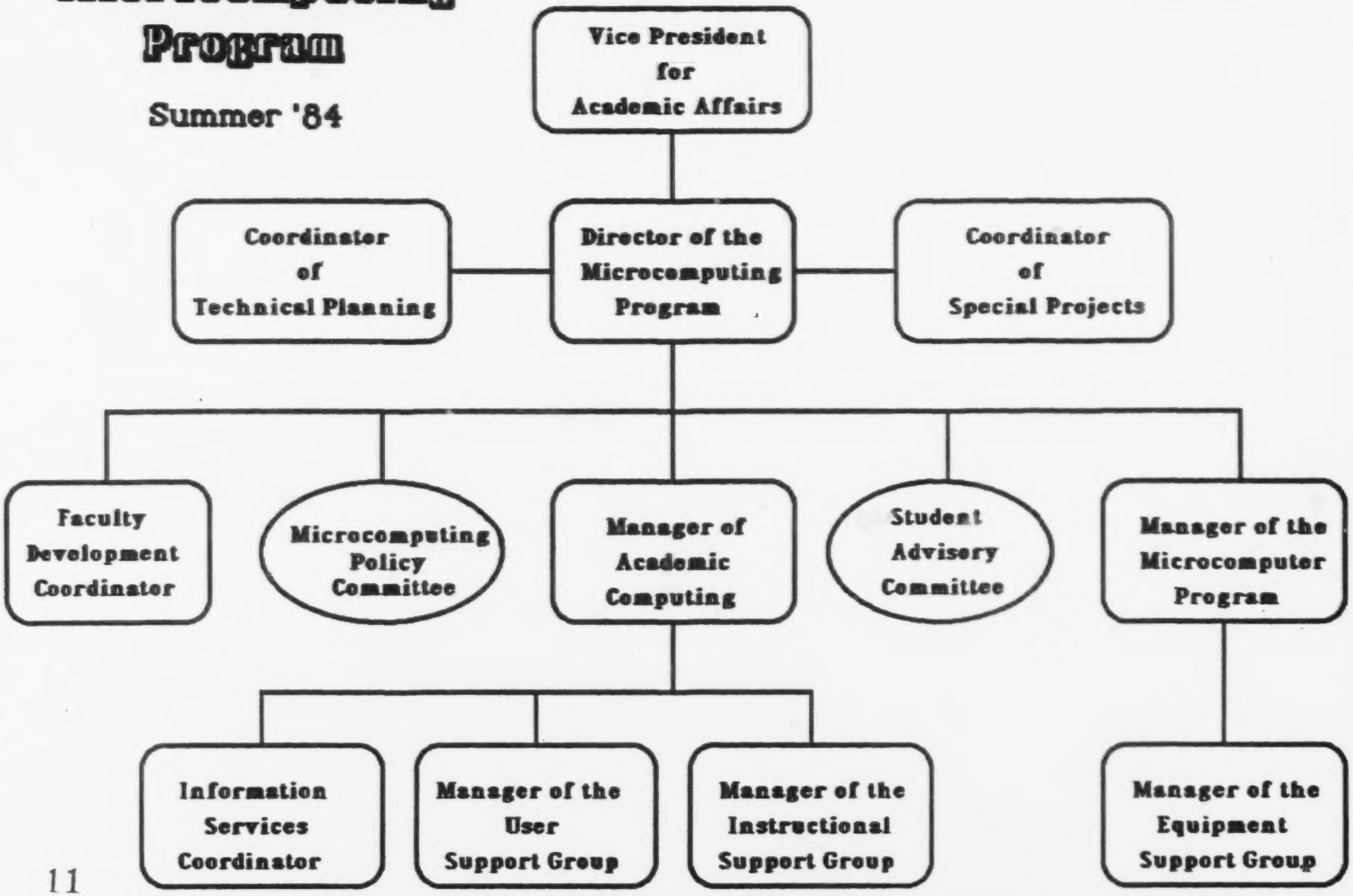
the Comptroller's Office. Considerable accounting and general business experience were required for this position.

Manager, User Services. The position of Manager of User Services was created during the second year of the program. User Services provides assistance to all users of all types of computer environments available on the University campus: microcomputers, the minicomputer network, mainframe, and on-line systems. User Services all produces a weekly newsletter for faculty to provide information related to the microcomputing program, a monthly newsletter to faculty, staff, and students on University-supported computing in general, information bulletins on University-supported packages and services, and a variety of software documentation.

The User Services Manager also oversees training for faculty, staff, and students on the use of University-supported hardware and software and coordinates on-site tours of the University's computing facilities. Technical knowledge, good communication skills, sensitivity to user concerns, and a strong service orientation were required for this position.

Drexel University Microcomputing Program

Summer '84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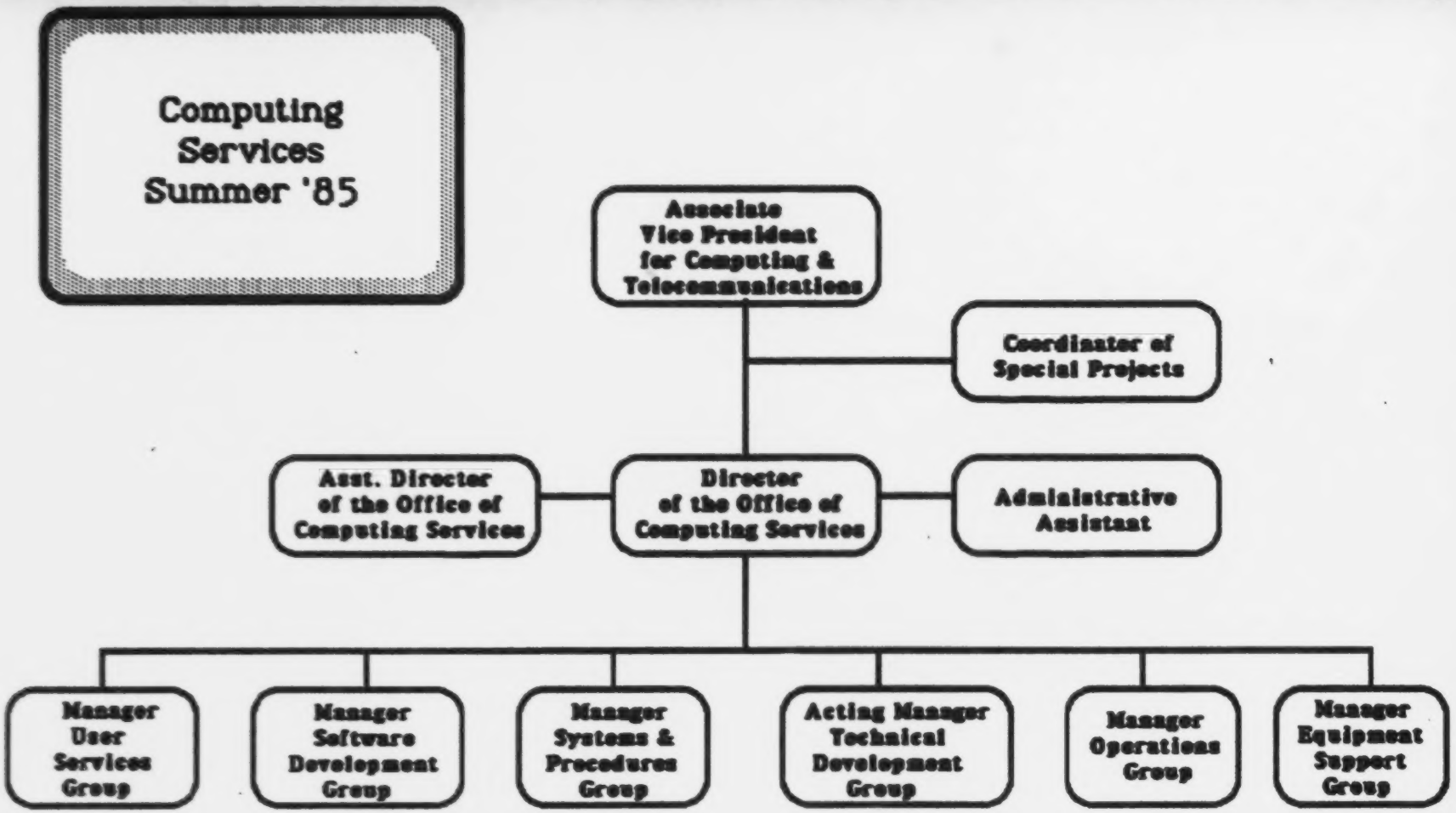
Manager of the Equipment Support Group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